

State
of
Vermont

Department
of
Human
Resources

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Co-editors

Karin Pelletier

Chris McConnell

From the Commissioner - David K. Herlihy

Greetings -

I keep on trying to come up with a phrase other than “exciting opportunity” to describe how I feel about my new role as Commissioner, but I really am excited about this chance. I’ve met many of you over the years that I have worked with DHR, first as an Assistant Attorney General beginning in 1995 and then as General Counsel beginning in 1998. Hopefully, those years of experience with the Department and familiarity with the issues that affect our workforce will help me to contribute. I can’t tell you how different it feels to be in this role. Instead of trying to help you deal with specific legal problems as they arise, I now have the chance to be a part of the ongoing process of making all our services and practices effective and efficient for you, your departments, and the employees who we serve.

One advantage of the years of experience with DHR is a pretty good understanding of the degree to which this Department relies on all of you as we strive to fulfill the responsibilities of the State of Vermont as an employer, and everyone I see around me in DHR shares that understanding. The HR Tool Box reflects our belief that open lines of communication among all of us are important for all of us to succeed. You will play a big part in how well this turns out. The HR Tool Box will be distributed quarterly via email to our HR Partners. Please contact Karin, karin.pelletier@state.vt.us, or Chris, chris.mcconnell@state.vt.us, with suggestions for future articles.

Employee Work Location Project

With emergency preparedness in mind, DHR is moving ahead to update employee work locations in the PeopleSoft database. We look forward to the ability to associate each State position with a building-specific Location Code in the PeopleSoft database so that the data can be used during emergencies in State buildings to identify the potentially affected employees.

In order to do this, each employee position number needs to be linked up with a building Location Code. DHR’s Karin Pelletier, who is coordinating this project, will be contacting you – if she hasn’t already – to ask for assistance identifying department duty stations/work locations for employees and then with the larger link up of department position numbers with the building location codes. So far the following departments have successfully completed their part in this process: Tax, Information & Innovation, Human Resources, Governor’s Office, Vermont Commission on Women, Agriculture, Commerce & Community Development, Transportation, Auditor’s Office, Liquor Control, Education, and Finance & Management. Your assistance with this data collection project is greatly appreciated.

Benefits Corner

Did you know...?

Newborn babies must be enrolled in CIGNA (the form must be in our office) **before the 61st day** after their birth or they will remain uninsured until the next open enrollment?

Dependents who are **over 19 years of age can continue coverage** on the health plan if they are enrolled as a full-time student, are disabled/handicapped, or are enrolled in college but on an approved medical leave of absence?

If an enrollment form is received **after the first 60 days of employment**, contractually the employee must wait until open enrollment – **even if the delay was not the fault of the employee?**

The new Medical/Dental Enrollment Form and Declaration of Health Coverage Form **can be completed “on-line”** and then printed for signature?

Uninsured employees who are eligible to participate in our plan can contact the Office of Vermont Health Access to apply for premium assistance?

Employees **do not receive personal leave** they accrued during their 6-month probationary period **until** a Completion of Probation personnel **action** is entered for them?

For any benefit-related questions, please contact one of the Benefits Administrators. We can be reached at (802) 828-3455 or (802) 828-0648 or email us at jerry.fry@state.vt.us or anne.carver@state.vt.us. We look forward to hearing from you!

Recruitment Services

The **Recruitment Services Division** welcomes two new Recruitment Specialists to our team.

New to State Government, Ellen Gokey joined the Recruitment Services Division on August 27, 2007. Ellen worked for the past six years at TD Banknorth where she was an HR generalist focusing on employee relations, recruitment and training. Ellen has a BA in Communications, with a minor in Human Resources. Ellen has been a great addition to our team! We welcome her enthusiasm and eagerness to learn more about Vermont State Government!



Gloria Abbiati rejoined the Recruitment Services Division on December 10, 2007. Gloria has 14 years of HR experience. Gloria worked at Norwich University as an HR generalist for five years and has been a State employee for the past eight years, working most recently in HR at the Agency of Natural Resources. Gloria has an Associate's Degree in Science and received her PHR certification in 2003. Gloria began her career with the Department of Human Resources and we welcome her back and look forward to working with her again!

Updates from the Division of Workforce Development and Wellness



Sasha Kohnowich, Health Educator

Janet Waters joined the Division of Workforce Development and Wellness on September 12th as the Wellness Nurse Educator for the Southeast/Central region of the state. She is new to Vermont and state government. She comes with a wealth of experience and energy and we are so pleased to have her!

On October 15th Sasha Kohnowich joined the Division of Workforce Development and Wellness having accepted the new position of Health Educator in the Division. Sasha is also new to Vermont and state government and comes to us with a wealth of community health education and grant experience – we are thrilled to have her on board!

We hope that you will join us in welcoming both Janet and Sasha to the Department and our Division – come on by and meet them!

Smoking Cessation Opportunity for Employees

The DHR Employee Wellness Program and VDH Tobacco Control Program have teamed up to roll out a statewide initiative to support smoking cessation. Connect to this information through the DHR home page “News and Announcements”

www.vermontpersonnel.org or the Employee Wellness Program home page for information on support and services.

If you or an employee want a **Ready-Set-STOP** smoking cessation class at your worksite, we would be happy to assist in setting up and/or advertising it. Please contact Dianne VanderBush, the Wellness Program Assistant, by email at Dianne.vanderbush@state.vt.us or call her at 802-241-1534 for more information. It is 1 hour per week for 4 weeks and can be held over the lunch break with minimal disruption to the work day.



Janet Waters, Nurse Educator

Other things to watch for in the coming months:

- Draft of Statewide Core Competencies for review
- Professional Development/ Training Templates – to plan for development both at the organizational and individual levels
- Opportunities to learn about Internships at the State (Web information, tool kit and trainings)
- New course offerings – *Fundamentals of Business Process*, *Writing for the Web*, *Working effectively with ESOL for supervisors* and more...

Consulting rates and information are now available online!

http://dev.vermontpersonnel.org/employee/pdf/Consulting_Rates.pdf

What Can We Do For You?

2007 has been a transition year for the department's *Administrative Services Division*, formerly titled the Fiscal and Information Management Division. One of the biggest changes mid-2007, is that the division expanded to include the Employee Benefits unit.

The employee benefits function of the division which includes the management/operations, and oversight of the medical, dental, life and other benefit plans available to state employees is provided by **Nicole Hill** who manages the operations side, including supervising **Jerry Fry** and **Anne Carver**, the benefits administrators. **Kathy Callaghan** manages the programs side while **Sara Peake** provides analysis and systems review.

The fiscal function of the division which includes accounting and budgeting for the department, is provided by **Sheri Rockcastle**, our business manager, and **Terri Tibbetts**, our HR administrator. Additionally, Terri administers the tuition reimbursement program for state employees.

Jennifer Herwood, **Sara Peake**, as well as **Harold Schwartz** perform the information management function of the division which includes analysis and reporting in the areas of market factor analysis, compensation, legislation, and a variety of other human resource data (including premium rate setting and the like), as well response to public records and other information requests.

All of us participate in ongoing reviews of systems,

with an eye to continuous quality improvement.

Harold Schwartz, the director of the division, provides advanced expertise and peer review in all three functional areas.

How you (or staff) might access the DHR Administrative Services Division:

Terri Tibbetts- would be involved in tuition reimbursement for you and/or your staff.

Sheri Rockcastle- would be involved in reciprocal financial transactions, or working with the business improvement group.

Nicole Hill- you or staff might have contact with Nicole on the new Catamount fee issue or possibly in HCM systems reviews.

Jerry Fry and Anne Carver- if CIGNA or Delta Dental can't answer employee questions about the plans, Anne and Jerry can help. In addition, Jerry is the go-to person if you have questions on the flexible spending account (FSA). Anne is the go-to person if you have questions on life insurance.

You or staff may have contact with Sara Peake when she bills departments for the department share of medical or dental premium for RIF'd employees.

You may have run into Jennifer Herwood in Discoverer training, which she had a key early role in developing, or you or your staff may have contact with Jennifer for a market factor analysis.

Revised I-9 Form

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced on November 26, 2007 that employers must transition to the revised Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) not later than Dec. 26, 2007. All employers are required to complete a Form I-9 for each employee hired in the United States.

The revised version of Form I-9 (includes the revision date -- Rev. 06/05/07 -- printed on the lower right corner of the form) is now **the only version valid for use**. The amended Form I-9 contains an updated list of acceptable identity and employment authorization documents that reflect the current regulations. USCIS explained that effective December 26, 2007, employers who fail to use the revised form will be subject to applicable penalties.



Annual Activity Program "Spring into Action 2007: Get Healthy Vermont" wraps up with a bang!!

Pictured above are recipients of "Most Inspirational" and "Top Movers". Governor Douglas presents awards and issues challenge to all State employees for ONE million steps in 2008.

The Department of Human Resources

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We're on the Web!
See us at:

www.vermontpersonnel.org

Save The Date!!!
January 9, 2008
9:00 – 12:00
HR Partners Meeting
Hazen's Notch,
The Summit
Waterbury

The current collective bargaining agreements effective July 1, 2007
are now available on the DHR website:

http://www.vermontpersonnel.org/employee/labor_cba.php